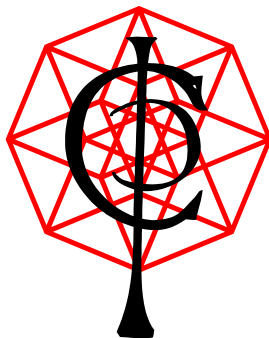


# THE REVIVAL OF MAGICK

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# THE REVIVAL OF MAGICK

## I

THE obvious course for one who wishes to write on Magick is to invoke the God Thoth, for He is Lord both of magick and of writing.

In truth, that is the very apt slip for our leash of silence. The word used by Sir Walter Scott for Magick is “gramarye,” and a ritual of magick is a “grimoire,” “grimorium,” or grammar; all from *gramma*, a latter. Thoth, scribe of the Gods, was probably just a man called Tahuti—the Egyptian form of the Coptic word Thoth—who invented writing. Fust, one remembers, who invented printing, became Faust, the “black magician.” The first great miracle of progress, after the conquest of fire, was this art of writing.

Magick then may be defined for our present purpose as the art of communicating without obvious means. Curiously, the new harnessing of that form of fire—I use the word in its old magical sense—called electricity to the shafts of the car of progress was followed by a new art of rather series of arts of communication without obvious means: the telegraph, the telephone, and now Hertz’s discovery (exploited by one Signor Marconi) of wireless telegraphy.

Now no man doubts the existence of a supreme and illimitable power, whether he conceive of it as soulless, unconscious and mechanical, or as spirit, self-conscious, and self-willed. You may think the Sun to be God; some very ignorant and some very illuminated people have done so; but

the fact is disputed by none, that the Sun, within the limits of its own system, is, physically speaking, the source of all light, heat, Energy in all its forms, as well as of the earth itself, Being or Matter in all its forms as we know it.

Now if we wish to obtain heat from the Sun, we can go and sit on Palm Beach; or we can dig up solar energy in the form of coal—and so on; in a hundred ways we can make communication with that material source of heat. Very good; magick pretends to be able to do the same thing with the Secret Source of all Being and all Form, all Matter and all Motion.

It claims to be able to draw water from the Fountain of all Things, according to its needs, by certain methods. And though ordinary prayer is a part of Magick, this point is to be considered, that in the purely religious theory, God may or may not think it fit to answer prayer. This then is the great heresy of Magick—or of religion, if you happen to be a Magician! The Magician claims to be able to force a favourable answer. If he tries to make the Elixir of Life, and fails, he has simply failed. He is a bad Magician, just as a chemist is a bad chemist who tries to make oxygen and fails. The chemist does not excuse himself by saying that it was the Will of God that he should not make oxygen that day!<sup>1</sup>

The explanation is simple. What the Magician calls God is merely the divine Emanation in himself. And the reconciliation with orthodox theology follows at once. The Magician is using the formula of Hermes Trismegistus, "That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, for the performance of the miracles of the One Substance."<sup>2</sup> That is to say, in order to perform his

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<sup>1</sup> [Compare J.G. Frazer's account of the magic-religion distinction in *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*.]

<sup>2</sup> [A quotation from the so-called Emerald Tablet.]

miracle he must call forth his own God in the Microcosm. That is united with the God of the Macrocosm by its likeness to it; and the Macrocosmic force then operates in the Universe without as the Magician has made it operate within himself; the miracle happens. Now then it follows that unless the will of the magician be really at one with the Will of the Cosmos, this likeness does not exist, this identification does not take place. Therefore the Magician cannot really perform any miracle unless that be already the Design of the Universe. So that he who sets out by saying "I will impose my will on all things" ends "Thy will be done."

It is possible, indeed, to perform magic in other ways by other formulæ, but all such efforts are mere temporary aberrations from the path; at the best they are mistakes; persisted in knowingly they become black magic; and in the worst event the sorcerer is cut off by his own act from the Cosmos, and becomes a "Brother of the Left Hand Path." This truth is taught by Wagner in *Parsifal*. Klingsor was unable to comply with the requirements of the Graal Knights; he could not harmonize Love and Holiness; so he mutilated himself, and was forever debarred from even a possibility of redemption.<sup>1</sup>

It was because the Church misunderstood this doctrine, and saw in magic but a rival power, that she strove with all the agony of fear to suppress it. Soon only charlatans dared to practice it, because they were known to be harmless. The whole thing fell into contempt.

When I was twenty-two years of age I devoted myself to the attainment of adeptship, or whatever you like to call it. That

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<sup>1</sup> [In Wagner's opera, based on a version of the Grail romance by Wolfram von Eschenbach, Klingsor had been refused admittance to the Grail Knights for failing to keep the traditional obligation of chastity, and responded by castrating himself, whereupon he was once more told to get lost.]

was indeed the question: what should I call it? (For I am first of all a poet, and expert in the use of words.) I decided to call my life-work magick. For this very reason, that it was fallen so utterly into disuse. I cut myself deliberately off from the modern jargon "theosophy," "occultism," and so on, all words with an up-to-date connotation: I would make my own connotation, and impose it on the world. The only chance of confusion was with prestidigitation, and that not being of the same universe of discourse, hurt no more than the homonymy of "box," "game" and a hundred other words. There was something of boyish defiance, too, no doubt, in my choice of the word. However, I labelled myself with it, and I used good gum!

It has been necessary to insist that Magick is done by an identification of the magus with the Supreme in order to show how in practice one goes to work.

There are two branches of this one tree; we may conveniently call them the Catholic and Protestant.

The Protestant method is that of direct prayer. As a child asks its father for a toy, so the magician asks God to cause rain, or whatever he may need at the moment. The prayer book is full of such spells, even to the extreme use of "Oh, Lord, who alone workest great marvels, send down upon our Bishops and Curates the healthful spirit of Thy grace." But there is no record of any favourable answer to this particular prayer!

In the supreme prayer of Christ in Gethsemane we find the advanced magician speaking. "If it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done." This ends in "My will, which is Thine, be done," for by-and-by Christ tells Pilate that if He wished He could have twelve legions of angels to defend Him. But he no longer wishes the cup to pass from Him; His will is one with the Father's.

Now, in order to persuade the God addressed that it is right to grant the prayer, or in order to convince oneself that one is asking for a proper miracle, one resorts to commemoration of other miracles wrought by that God in the past.

Thus the talisman made by Dr. Dee, which raised the tempest in which the Spanish Armada was destroyed,<sup>1</sup> has figured upon it a symbolic image of a face blowing forth a great wind, and around it is the versicle “He sent forth His lightnings and scattered them”—or some similar words. God is reminded that in the past He brought victory to His chosen people by raising a storm at the proper moment. There is, in legal phrase, a precedent for the miracle.

The conjurations of the Grimoires abound in this sort of recitation before the God of His previous exploits. Here then is the link with the second form of magick—the “Catholic.” For in Catholic magick the formula is this: the story of the God is enacted before Him; He is moved by the sight of His own sufferings or adventures,<sup>2</sup> and at the same time the sympathy of the actors with the God is stirred to its highest point.

The Bacchæ of Euripides is a perfect example of this kind of ritual. In fact, almost all Greek drama of the classic period is of this kind. The “*deus ex machina*”<sup>3</sup> speech at the end marks the identification complete. Similarly, the Eleusinian Mysteries celebrated the adventures of Demeter; those of Adonis and Osiris and Mithras tell the story of the Sun, and thus invoke his power. J. M. Robertson goes further, and says that the

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<sup>1</sup> [This is possibly an invention of Crowley’s, or a repetition of a legend current in the Golden Dawn; it is not supported by Dee’s extant diaries.]

<sup>2</sup> Here we must remember that most Gods are deified men.

<sup>3</sup> [*Lat.* “God from a machine”; a term originating in classical drama where writers who were unable to resolve their plot, had a god turn up, in some instances literally lowered onto the scene by stage machinery, to sort everything out.]

story of the Last Supper, Trial and Crucifixion of Christ is not a history but a scenario. Nor is this view confined to rationalists and anthropologists of the type of Spencer, Frazer, and Grant Allen; many Christian mystics uphold it, and say that their reverence for the Logos is not lessened but increased by the identification of the legend of His life and death with that of the Cosmos.

I must again call attention to the necessity of this formula of identification in order to show the impossibility of evil in magick. Evil is synonymous with failure.

With the low class sorcerer who sells himself as a slave to some “devil” we have nothing here to do.. That is the anti-thesis of magick. The aim is to command the spirits. Very well; suppose we begin in a gross, selfish, avaricious way, and try to get the spirits to bring us gold. We call Hismael, the Spirit of Jupiter. Nothing happens. We learn that Hismael will not be commanded but by his proper Intelligence, Iophiel. So we call Iophiel. Equal recalcitrance on the part of Iophiel, who is only amenable to the orders of Sachiel, his Angel. Same story with Sachiel. We go to Tzadquiél the Archangel. Still no good; for Tzadquiél obeys none but El. Good; we invoke El, the God.<sup>1</sup> We must then become El; and having done so, having entered into that vast divine essence, we cannot bother any more as to whether we have any money. We have left all that behind. So then we see that to perform any miracle we must show a divine reason for it. I have often asked for money and obtained it; but only when the money was really needed for some manifestly cosmic benefit.

In fact, with whatever work one begins, one is led up to the Great Work. This is a logical process, and even if one were

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<sup>1</sup> [These names all belong to the Qabalistic hierarchies of Jupiter / Chesed. See for example Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia*, lib. ii., and 777.]



tempted to be illogical, and turn to Black Magic, those great forces whose names one has (perhaps ignorantly) invoked are invisibly about one, and bring one into line with a jerk—and none too gentle a jerk at that!

Éliphas Lévi defines Black Magic as the result of the persistence of the will in the absurd. One does not go mad on seeing the devil, because before invoking him one must be already mad.

It is extraordinary how the formula of Hermes Trismegistus holds throughout; Magick is but the extension of the microcosm in the macrocosm. And as the macrocosm is the greater, it follows that what one does by magick is to attune oneself with the Infinite. “In myself I am nothing; in Thee I am All-self. Dwell Thou in me! and bring me to that Self which is in Thee!” concludes the great prayer of the Rosicrucians.<sup>1</sup>

This, however, explains why those who meddle with magick out of curiosity, or who try treacheries on magicians, find themselves in trouble. The Magician is an expression of the Will of the Universe: the meddlers rebel, and suffer. To oppose a true Magician is as silly as to put your hand on a circular saw in motion. But the handless blames the saw.

I know of one modern Master who has been often attacked. In every case the attacker has come to absolute ruin. One woman came to him, a woman old and sly, and wormed herself into his confidence. He knew her for an enemy, and trusted her absolutely. He left her his checkbook duly signed, and she embezzled his money. He left his wife in her care, and she tried to corrupt her. By-and-by it became obvious to the woman that the Master knew everything. He only smiled, and

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<sup>1</sup> [This prayer was used in the Adeptus Minor ritual of Mathers’ R.R. et A.C., having been translated from one appearing in *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*, a late 18th-century German “Rosicrucian” work.]

continued to trust her. So she went down with meningitis, and there was an end of her.

In such a case the only mistake the magician can make is to defend himself in the normal manner. He leaves his castle; he will be slain. You must not go onto the enemy's ground. Perfect love, perfect faith, perfect trust, and you are unassailable. But use the weapons of the flesh, and you are lost.

## II

It is in this somewhat dry disquisition, bordering as it does, I am afraid, on metaphysics, that is to be sought the reason for the revival of magick. Unless this explanation were first given, it might seem a mere phenomenon of folly, an hysterical exacerbation due to over-civilization.

But assuming that irrefutable form of idealism which contents itself with the demonstration that, knowledge being a function of the mind, as the materialists not merely concede, but insist, the universe as we know it is equivalent to the contents of that mind; and assuming also that the mind contains a power able to control thought; then there is no absurdity in asserting that mind may be the master of matter. And the empirical rules laid down by the magicians of old may prove to some extent of use in practice.

Such rules are in fact the inheritance of the Magi. This is not the place to discuss the disputed cases of the Rosicrucians, of the Comte de St. Germain, of Cagliostro, and others whose names will readily occur. The periods in which they lived are obscure, and the controversies sterile. But it is at least evident that some valid tradition lurked somewhere, for within the memory of living men are Éliphas Lévi<sup>1</sup> and his pupil Bulwer

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<sup>1</sup> [Alphonse Louis Constant (1810-1875), prolific French writer on magick.]

Lytton.<sup>1</sup> Now it is not philosophical to suppose that Lévi was an upstart genius, though he does claim to have “forced an answer from the ancient oracles” and indeed to have reconstituted magick. I do not believe this to be strictly true; I believe that Lévi had living masters. But that Lévi first translated ancient ideas into modern terms is undeniable. Moreover, the influence of this great master was enormous, even in spheres external to his particular orb. The revival of French Literature with Baudelaire, Balzac, Gautier, Verlaine, de Banville, d’Aurevilly, Haraucourt, Rollinat, the de Goncourts and a dozen other names of the first rank, was in a sense his work. It was he that formulated the philosophical postulates that made their art possible and triumphant. Such sentences as this: “A pure style is an aureole of holiness” may pass as the very canon of art. His reconciliations of right and duty, liberty and obedience, are cardinal to the gate of modern thought. I do not hesitate to assert that very soon *The Key of the Mysteries*<sup>2</sup> will be recognized as the very incarnation of the spirit of his time.

In this book Lévi offered to the Church a way out of the difficulties raised by the advance of Science. That she rejected it was her suicide; just as Napoleon’s disdain of his political philosophy was written large in letters of blood at Wörth, Gravelotte, Metz and Sedan.<sup>3</sup>

However, the few capable of initiation took Lévi to their hearts; and from that hour the revival of magick has never

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<sup>1</sup> [Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Baron Lytton (1803-1873), English novelist.]

<sup>2</sup> [*La Clef des grands mystères*, one of Lévi’s less well-known works. Translated excerpts appeared in a digest of Lévi’s writings issued by Waite as *The Mysteries of Magic*; Crowley prepared a complete translation which was issued in *The Equinox* in 1913 and subsequently reprinted in book form.]

<sup>3</sup> [The reference is to Napoleon III whose régime, the “Second Empire,” came to an end in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1), specifically after the battle of Sedan (September 1st, 1870). Wörth, Gravelotte and Metz were earlier battles in this war, which all went badly for the French.]

been in doubt. At the moment almost of Levi's death the Theosophical Society was founded; and Blavatsky's debt to the French Adept is the greatest of all her obligations. In England Anna Kingsford—a mere megaphone for Edward Maitland—was at work; also there was Mr. S. L. Mathers, a considerable magician who subsequently fell, and was smashed beyond recognition;<sup>1</sup> and, in the nineties, the giant figure of Allan Bennett.<sup>2</sup>

In magical literature itself we find, as is to be expected, a reflection of these facts. Ever since Christian Rosencreutz<sup>4</sup> there is nothing serious and first-hand, until Éliphas Lévi. The magical tradition was the basis of gracious fables like *Undine*, and of frivolities like *The Rape of the Lock* and its source the *Comte de Gabalis*. Sometimes it is treated more seriously—as in Lewis' *Monk*, and Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein*. There are legends of Cagliostro, too, in Dumas' *Memoirs of a Physician*, and there is the *Diable boiteux* and the *Diable amoureux*. Nor let ever be forgotten that terrible and true magical apologue *La peau de chagrin*.

Casanova gives an admirable view of the matter, and Thackeray copies him cleverly enough in *Barry Lyndon*. But it is all hearsay. Éliphas Lévi comes up stage, and says plainly to the world: "I myself did such and such an operation of magick in such and such a time and place."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Samuel Liddell "MacGregor" Mathers (18??-1919) co-founded the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1887 and soon became its sole Chief. When the G.D. broke up in 1900 Crowley sided with Mathers for a time, but ca. 1903 / 4 fell out with him and—in a printed edition of the *Goëtia* pirated from a MS. which Mathers had edited and circulated among G.D. members—attacked Mathers and proclaimed himself head of the Rosicrucian Order.]

<sup>2</sup> [Allan Bennett (1872-1923), a member of the G.D. who was for a time a close friend and colleague of Crowley; later emigrated and became a Buddhist monk.]

<sup>3</sup> [See Levi, *Rituel de Haute Magie* (English trans. as *Ritual of Transcendental Magic*), cap. XIII.]

He wears a mask illegible enough, it is true; but we have at least *oratio recta* and not *oratio obliqua*. For which we who remember bitter schooldays thank God, and prefer Lévi to Livy!

In his footsteps if Bulwer Lytton did not follow, it was because of his public career. He comes near it. Everyone within even the widest ripple that is caused on the water of society when the Stone of the Wise is thrown therein knew that Sir Philip Derval's<sup>1</sup> laboratory was an accurate description of Lytton's own magical cabinet. It was clear to all ripe intelligence that in *Zanoni* the author was seriously expounding his own beliefs, discussing his own problems, justifying his own career. In the *Strange Story* he recounts incidents surely seen with his own eyes.

Read his account of the evocation of a demon, and his other of an ordeal, and compare them with the stories of Lévi. Observe how the ancient directness revives in them, and contrast them with the sneering rubbish of the courtly abbé who wrote the *Comte de Gabalis*.

It is evident where the truth lies. And now let us turn to the evidence of men yet living.

### III

Allan Bennett was born at the time of the Franco-Prussian war. His father, an engineer, died when he was a young child, and his mother brought him up a strict Catholic.

When he was about 8 years old he happened to hear that if you repeated the "Lord's Prayer" backwards, the Devil would come. This enterprising infant at once set himself to learn it backwards, and, when letter-perfect, went into the garden and said it. Something—the Devil or one of his angels—did

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<sup>1</sup> [A character in Lytton's novel *A Strange Story*.]

appear, and the child ran screaming in terror to the house.

We hear of nothing else of the same kind for a long while, and the same startling sporadic success is true of his first step in mysticism. When he was about 18, without any premonitory symptom, he was suddenly caught up into the trance called Shivadarshana.<sup>1</sup> We cannot stop here to describe this; suffice it to say that it is the highest attainment in this line, save perhaps one, possible to man.

Its effect upon him was catastrophic; he realized instantly and without any doubt that no other state was worthy of a moment's thought, and he unhesitatingly abandoned all, if perchance he might discover how to achieve of set purpose what had been thrust on him by destiny. His natural tendency to magic drew him into that line of work, and so at the age of 25 we find him already famous for his powers in this art.

He had a "blasting rod" constructed simply of the lustre of an old-fashioned chandelier,<sup>2</sup> and he was always cheerfully ready to demonstrate its power by pointing it at any convenient sceptic, and paralyzing him for a few hours or days.

For more serious magical work he had a rod of almond tipped with a golden star of five points, each point engraved with a letter of the Ineffable Name Jeheshua;<sup>3</sup> in the centre was a diamond. With this he would trace mysterious figures in the air, and, visible to the ordinary eye, they would stand out in faint bluish light. On great occasions, working in a circle, and conjuring the spirits by the great names of the *Key of Solomon* or the "Enochian Calls" of spirits given him by Dr. Dee, he would obtain the creature necessary to his work in visible and

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<sup>1</sup> [One of the higher Hindu trances.]

<sup>2</sup> [A photograph of what is claimed to be this object appears in a plate in *Outside the Circles of Time* by Kenneth Grant.]

<sup>3</sup> יהושוע: a Qabalistic mis-spelling of Joshua or Jesus.]

tangible form. On one occasion he evoked Hismael, the lowest manifestation of Jupiter, and, through a series of accidents, was led to step out of his circle without effectively banishing the spirit. He was felled to the ground, and only recovered five or six hours later. But this was simply a single untoward incident in a career of almost monotonous success.

However, he was certainly a careless person. On one occasion he had consecrated a talisman of the Moon to cause rain. (As he lived in London, I cannot imagine why he did this!) To make it work it had to be immersed in water. He would put it in a basin or tumbler, and within a few minutes the clouds would gather and the rain begin: instructive to his pupils, and beneficial to the country. But one day he lost the talisman. It worked its way into a sewer, and London had the wettest summer in the memory of man!

It was early in 1899 that I became the pupil of this great master. I say "great master," and I ask to be taken on trust, for in this account of magick it would be dull to dwell upon his true qualities; I must rather seek to amuse by recounting his misadventures. Incidentally, any magical manifestation whatever is a regrettable incident. Just as in war, even the greatest victories cost something. Every battle is an obstruction in the march of the conqueror.

In order to explain my meeting with Allan Bennett it is necessary to give a short resume of my own magical career.

## IV

I was in my third year at Cambridge when the call came. I had been intended for the Diplomatic Service, and had also a great ambition to be a poet. In fact, I had written many hundred thousand lines, all of which I diligently destroyed in one great holocaust of paraffin and paper a matter of eight years later. It

now struck me quite suddenly that, even if I got the Embassy at Paris—why, who was ambassador a century before? I did not know, and nobody knew, or cared.

Even if I got fame like that of Æschylus—why, who reads Æschylus? A few scores only, even in a University where Classics are compulsory.

And, anyhow, one day or other the earth must fall into the sun, or go dead like the moon. I saw the Vanity of Things. I must find a material to build my temple; something more permanent than the hearts and minds of men. This conclusion came to me reasonably enough, yet with all the force of a vision. I cannot hope to convey the quality of that despair. I rushed to the Bookseller, ordered all works ever published on Alchemy, Magic, and the like, and spent the long winter nights in ploughing those dreary sands. I had not knowledge enough even to begin to understand them.

However, the magical capacity was there, as will be seen. “In my distress I called upon the Lord; and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.”

This is indeed the essential quality of a magician, that he should be able, without obvious means, to send forth his will-currents to the desired quarters, and awake them to answer. It is not necessary that the reply should come magically; he should expect his will obeyed in the ordinary course of events. As an example, let me give the use I made of a talisman of Abramelin “to have books of magic.” When I consecrated it, I was childish enough to expect the instant appearance of a Genie with flames in his mouth and books in his hand. Instead of this, all that happened was that a man called to see me with just those books that I needed, for sale. The point of the story is that I had spent weeks with all the booksellers in England, trying to get just those books. And the man knew



nothing of that; he had come on an impulse.

To return: one of the books that I had bought at Cambridge was *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts*, the catchpenny production of an ignorant, dipsomaniac, half-demented scholiast named Waite, whose sole asset was a pompous jargon composed of obsolete words. In his preface he said—so far as one could understand—that he was in touch with more Masters, Adepts, Mahatmas, Rosicrucians and Hermetists than had ever appeared even in pseudo-occult literature.

To him I wrote for advice and received many folios of rigmarole in return. The only intelligible sentence was one in which he recommended me to read Von Eckartshausen's *Cloud Upon the Sanctuary*. This book spoke of a secret church, of a brotherhood of initiates, exactly filling the bill. I read this book over and over again at Wastdale Head in Cumberland, where I spent Easter of 1898 climbing with a splendid mountaineer, one of the three best the world has ever seen, but a terrible scoffer at all occult lore. However, I sent out my S.O.S. call to the Brotherhood, and this is what resulted:

In July, 1898, I was at a camp on the Schonbühl Glacier above Zermatt, and had gone down to the village for a respite from the constant snowstorms. In the Beerhall one night, like the young ass I was, I started to lay down the law on Alchemy. To hear me, one would think I had just discharged Nicolas Flamel for cleaning my athanor badly, and beaten Basil Valentine over the head for breaking my alembic!

One of the party<sup>1</sup> took me seriously; he saw that my bombast concealed a real desire of knowledge. We walked to the hotel together. I saw that he really knew what I pretended to know, and I dropped my "side" and became the humble

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<sup>1</sup> [Julian Baker (Frater Causa Scientæ), a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.]

learner. I had promised myself to renew the conversation in the morning: to my consternation he had disappeared. I made a vigorous search, and three days later caught him as he was walking down the valley to Vieve. I walked with him and never left him till he had promised to meet me in London and introduce me to a certain Brotherhood of which he spake darkly.

The rest of the story is short. In London he introduced me to a really great magician, one known to adepts as Frater Volo Noscere,<sup>1</sup> who introduced me to a true magical brotherhood. It was more than a year afterwards that I found myself again at a dead-centre. Again I sent out the S.O.S. call from the City of Mexico. The next mail brought me a letter from Frater V.N., solving the questions which I had not asked! And again, two months later I sent out the call. This time a Master came from England to teach me a New Path—and who should it be but the mountaineer, who had always passed for a sceptic? At the moment of my first call he had been sitting opposite me at the fireplace, had been linked to me on the precipices of Scafell by a rope—if only I had the eyes to see him!

My life has been full of such incidents; if anyone cry “coincidence,” let him also admit that her long arm was very effectively pulled by my conjuration!

Now to more amusing facts of my career. The first thing I learnt was to travel in the astral body. This seems to have been a natural gift with me; in half-a-dozen experiments I was already master of the “Astral Plane.” I could go where I would, see what I would, hear what I would. At that time I did not know of those higher planes to which initiation is the only key.

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<sup>1</sup> [*Lat.*, “I want to know.” George Cecil Jones, a G.D. adept who later (ca. 1907) co-founded the A.:A.: with Crowley.]

The next step to going out on the Astral Plane is to get it to return the visit; in other words, evocation of spirits to material appearance. It was just as I started on this that I found Allan Bennett. The occasion was an initiation into the order of which we were both members;<sup>1</sup> but he had not been present since I joined it. After the ceremony I was led trembling before the great man, and of course, could say not a word. However, in the ante-room, an hour later, he came directly to me and began: "So, little brother, you have been meddling with the Goëtia." I protested myself unworthy even to pronounce the word! But he had spotted me as a promising colt, and when, using my opportunity, I made myself even as his familiar spirit, he consented to take me as a pupil. Before long we were working together day and night, and a devil of a time we had!

In my chambers in Chancery Lane I fitted up a temple, the walls covered by six vast mirrors, so as to throw back the force of the invocations. There were circle and triangle on the floor, and an altar in the midst of the circle.

I constructed all my magical weapons with my own hands, except the wand, which cannot be made, but must be transmitted. This, a shaft of almond cut with a single blow of the Magick Knife at sunrise on Easter morn, was transmitted to me by Frater Volo Noscere.

The effect of all this was pretty sultry.

I was attacked by a black magician<sup>2</sup> in the very early days—the story is told at length and with perfect accuracy of detail in my tale, "At the Fork of the Roads"; it is too long to cite here. I will only say that a woman was sent by the Black

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<sup>1</sup> [*i.e.*, the Golden Dawn.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Butler Yeats, the poet; a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn whom Crowley resented owing to personality clashes and professional jealousy.]

Lodge to get a drop of my blood, that she succeeded, that for ten nights following I was assailed by a succubus which I killed with my hands every time, that with the help of my master I put her out of business by sending a plague of cats to her house, and that when she came to try for more blood I punished her by sending her into my black temple—a tiny closet where I kept a skeleton which I fed on mice and birds with the idea of creating a material and living demon servant—where she was rent in pieces by the evil things she had invoked. She went to the devil, and her master fled the country.

Not bad, all this, for one's first year of magick?

One of our great exploits was the saving of the life of my master. Absolutely unselfish, he would never stir to help himself, and he was a permanent invalid from spasmodic asthma, with complications. Frater V. N. and I determined, in the name and for the sake of the Order, to save him. We evoked the spirit Buer<sup>1</sup> to visible appearance. This was not wholly successful; at that time we wanted things to happen as they did in books—for we were young. But we got the right leg and the foot and ankle of the left as solid as need be; and the head, helmeted, was dimly visible through the incense smoke. In those days we were too pious to use blood, or we might have done better. However, the purpose of the work succeeded. The Master recovered, and is alive to this day—fifteen years later.

Curious how dull good is, how amusing evil! Much keener in memory is one night when Frater V. N. and I were alone together working on the talismans and other necessities for some operation or other, I entirely forget what. We went out to

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<sup>1</sup> [A Goëtic President who, amongst other things, "healeth all distempers in men."]

dinner, and before leaving the room, I noticed that the temple door was slightly open. It was locked by a Yale key of which there was but one, which had never left my possession. In those days my chief alarm was that some one would get into my magical affairs.

(Nowadays I callously let them in; if they blow their heads off, that's their affair, not mine!) So I sedulously slammed and tested the door, and out we went to dinner. On the stairs was a black cat—not a real cat, either. Back we came from a perfectly temperate meal, found the outer door secure as we had left it, entered, found the temple door wide open, though with no sign of violence, and the altar overthrown, and its furniture tossed in all directions.—And then the fun began!

Round and round the big library tramped the devils all the evening, an endless procession; 316 of them we counted, described, named, and put down in a book. It was the most awesome and ghastly experience I had known. Strange how they love to open doors! In the East of my big temple in Scotland was a secret shrine, on to which folding doors opened. These I would lock, padlock, seal, nail down, fasten (in short) by every manner of means; yet, every time I left the room, I expected to find them open. Too often to recount, I did so. I set all kinds of traps for the spirits; it was useless. As long as I was in the room nothing would happen; the moment I shut the outer doors behind me, the inner ones would open noiselessly. I ultimately had to perform a special ceremony to get rid of the annoyance. The demons who played this game were the 49 servitors of Beelzebub; when tamed they became exceedingly useful.

There is a manuscript in the Arsenal Library of Paris which has been translated and published under this title, *The Book of*

*the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.<sup>1</sup> It is the best and the most dangerous book ever written. The translator, who lived at the other end of Paris, had to give up cycling to the library, so many were his accidents. Even afoot, he was in constant danger of his life. And he misused the book, fell from a very creditable degree of attainment as a magician to be a loafer, a dipsomaniac, a sponger, and a blackmailer; in the end he died insane.<sup>2</sup>

The book is the address of one "Abraham the Jew" to his second son, Lamech, bestowing this magick upon him. The author records his research, his many travels and disappointments. At last he meets with one Abramelin in Egypt, goes with him into an oasis, and is there initiated by the bestowal of this Sacred Magick. He returns, achieves the task, and employs his powers to the glory of God and the benefit of his neighbor, "forcing even bishops to restore stolen property," winning battles for Electors by the timely creation of "artificial cavalry," healing the sick wholesale, and generally bestirring himself as a philanthropist.

The substance of the operation is as follows: Get a house in a quiet place, have a terrace opening to the North of your Oratory, have robes and a crown, a wand, and a few other not-too-Persian apparatus, and then get busy. Pray more and more every day to obtain the Knowledge and Conversation of your Holy Guardian Angel. After two months cut out all distractions and pray harder. After two months of that, pray harder still.

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<sup>1</sup> [The MS. of *Abramelin in the Arsenal* is a French translation, somewhat incomplete and defective, of a work the earliest known MSS. of which are in German and believed to date to the early seventeenth century. About 1899, S.L. Mathers prepared and privately published an English translation from this French MS.]

<sup>2</sup> [This statement is a malicious lie. Mathers died in the influenza epidemic following the world war; he was alive at the time this was written.]

Then the climax. The Angel appears and instructs. Then and not till then summon the Four Great Princes of the Evil of the World and compel them to swear obedience on the wand, and order them to operate certain talismans. The next day call the Eight Sub-Princes, and the third day their servitors.

The book is written throughout in a serious and simple style. It is by far the most convincing mediaeval magical document in existence. The personality of Abraham himself is evidence. And any person who doubts magick has only to get a copy of the book, and refuse to take it seriously. He will get proofs enough in standard time; place, the back of the neck!

But if you take it seriously and reverently, if you aspire with your whole will to this attainment, you are safe. The blows of the demon will fall only on those about you.

Yet every obstacle will be put in your way. For example, I had command of what was for all practical purposes unlimited money. I didn't care what I spent on this work. It took me eleven months to find a house.

In copying out on vellum the talismans, I used the breakfast-room of that house, a room chosen because it was light and cheerful and caught the early morning sun. The weather was fine. Yet I had to do my copying by artificial light. The sun could not penetrate the murk that gathered about those talismans.

One day I returned from shooting on the hill to find a Catholic Priest in my drawing room. It was to ask my permission to do what he could for my gardener, a total abstainer of twenty years' standing who had gone raving drunk.

My housekeeper vanished, unable to bear the eeriness of the place.

An adept with whom I had arranged that he should stay to be a link between me and the outer world likewise fled in terror without a word of warning.

One of the workmen employed about the place went raving mad, and tried to kill me. Others again became dipsomaniacs. All my dogs died. My cook very nearly died, and was only saved by a talisman.

Such are just a few of many incidents which averted the tragedy of dullness from my daily life. And all this, mind you, at the mere threat to perform the Operation!

Time would fail me to tell of all the untoward events that happened to people who did not even go so far as this. Only to have that book on one's shelves is a more serious risk than drying dynamite on a stove!

The talismans work automatically. They are as easy to explode as Iodide of Nitrogen, and a sight more dangerous. My friend and editor, Captain J. F. C. Fuller, once marked his place in the book with his butcher's bill; a couple of days later the butcher was at work; his knife slipped, pierced his thigh and killed him. As Fuller observed at the time, "It may be only a coincidence, but it's just as bad for the butcher!"

"At my initiation I was taught to be cautious" is a note in one system;<sup>1</sup> in another the neophyte is told "Fear is failure, and the forerunner of failure. Be thou therefore without fear, for in the heart of the coward virtue abideth not."<sup>2</sup>

Keep these two precepts constantly in your mind, and you should go far and fast.

Now for the third class of magical operations! It deals no longer with the brain of the magician himself, as in the case of visions and evocations; it acts upon third parties directly. I

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<sup>1</sup> [Freemasonry.]

<sup>2</sup> [Neophyte initiation in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.]



refer to the arts of “fascination” in its proper sense—the word comes from the Latin “fascinum.” Love is blind: and fascination includes all arts that have this effect. You transform yourself, like Zeus into swan or bull, like Lucius into an ass, like the Egyptian Magi into an hawk, swallow, or Ibis, or like the Syrian into a dove, and by this means compel the desired object to your arms. Or you become invisible—in the practical sense that you remain unseen by those whom you wish not to see you, and if you are playfully inclined, and hungry, you become a bat or a wolf and go afield for blood. These stories are not legends: they veil true powers. I only once tried vampirism, for examination purposes, and in about an hour I bled my victim white. I passed with honors and special mention.

Of course, the reason why one does not do these things is that in the trance *Atmadarshana*, on the threshold of masterpiece,<sup>1</sup> one loses one’s Ego for ever. Thenceforth the man exists only as a vehicle for an Impersonal Master; he lives his own life, and does his own duty, but the Master in him doesn’t care what happens to him.

The other day a young lady came to consult me. I gave her about a thousand dollars’ worth of information. She asked me what I was going to charge. I said: “Nothing; regard me as a bank account on which you can always draw.” She said: “But you must eat!” I answered: “I do not see the necessity.”

I am always being asked why, if I have all these powers, I do not cause stones to become bread, and throw myself from the Woolworth Building in order to prove the truth of the Ninety-first Psalm, and obtain all the kingdoms of the earth at slight cost to self-respect.

Why did Christ refuse in the Temptation on the Mount?

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<sup>1</sup> [Probably an error in the *International* publication for ‘Mastery’ or something similar.]

It is the same story: I am come to do the Will of Him that sent me. And if I have to die on the cross, that is better than living on it!

One form of fascination is the power over animals. Persuade your animal that you are not that dangerous wild beast, a man, and your task is over.

Remember St. Francis preaching to birds and fishes. I have seen Allan Bennett do the same with the krait, the deadliest of the Indian snakes. We met it on a road. Before I could blow its head off with my revolver (the first duty of man) Allan interposed with his umbrella. But not to kill it. He deliberately stirred it up. It struck at the umbrella. "That," said Allan, "is anger," and went on to prove to the (I trust attentive) reptile the terrible results on character of allowing oneself to give way to anger!

He also animadverted on the danger of frequenting the public highway, and, to conclude, removed the beast gently to the long grass. As a krait can strike in the fiftieth part of a second, and kill (if he does strike) in about ten minutes, and as Allan's only protection, besides his divinity, was a pair of thin white duck trousers, I think that may stand as one of the bravest acts ever done. I consider myself a bit of a hero merely to have stood by!

However, I learnt a few tricks of this kind myself; for example—a thing most useful in the tropics—how to prevent mosquitoes from biting one. This is done by thinking kindly of them. It must be a genuine spontaneous feeling of brotherhood, or it won't work. You can also pick up anything hot by fixing the attention on the fact that "it doesn't hurt." But that again is a matter of knack. If you think about it too hard, you can no longer do it. I believe D. D. Home had this power.

Again, you can prevent things from biting you by certain

breathing exercises. Hold the breath in such a way that the body becomes spasmodically rigid, and insects cannot pierce the skin. Near my bungalow at Kandy was a waterfall with a pool. Allan Bennett used to feed the leeches every morning. At any moment he could stop the leech, though already fastened to his wrist, by this breathing trick. We would put our hands together into the water; his would come out free, mine with a dozen leeches on it. At such moments I would bitterly remark that a coyote will not eat a dead Mexican, but it failed to annoy him.

With invisibility I was very successful. I made a big operation of it in the City of Mexico, and practiced daily for months in front of a mirror. I got good at it at last; and several times I have saved my life, and even things that I valued, thereby.

Another important attainment is that of traveling in the "astral body." This, too, I practiced hard. I was able in time to make my presence known to a person at a distance, by a sort of instinct. Soon I got it so that I could be both seen and heard. I have not yet been able to impress inanimate objects, for I gave up this class of work as not essential to the Great Work. For instance, when I was in Honolulu I had a long talk with a girl in Hong Kong. I described the town, and her house and room, with accuracy, in great detail. She, too, saw me and wrote down my remarks correctly. But I failed to knock a vase off the mantel, as I wished.

The point is this. To "get into the astral body" really means to allow the consciousness to rest in a vehicle of fine matter, and, detaching that from the gross body, to move about. But this has its drawbacks. One is no longer at all on the material plane, but on the astral plane, and one must not expect to see material things. This is the blunder made by "physical clair-voyants" and the cause of their constant errors. No; for

physical clairvoyance, or for action at a distance, somewhere on the astral one must pick up ready material as a basis for a sort of "incarnation."

Thus the girl I speak of had burnt incense specially to give me a body visible and tangible and audible. But incense is not strong enough to make a body mechanically solid. It becomes sensible to the eye and ear of a living person, as a cloud is, but not strong enough to resist pressure.

However, by offering blood one can construct a body good enough for, say, courtship and marriage. I have done this often enough; it is not at all difficult when the conditions are right. It is dangerous, though; if anything happened to the blood when you were using it, there would be a nasty mess, and if the blood be not carefully destroyed after you have finished with it, it may be seized by some vampirish elemental or demon. I think no one below the grade of Magister Templi should use blood, unless he be also an initiate of the IX° of O.T.O.

Such have been only a few of very varied activities. I may remark that the methods so far employed are not altogether satisfactory. There is too much accident, for one thing. Quite recently, a disciple of mine, painting that great square of letters which synthesizes the elemental forces of water, had a tank burst and flood his house. On another occasion, at headquarters, teaching astral traveling through the Tablet of Fire, we had five fires in three days, while the disciple who was being taught went home the third night, and found his house burning, a fire having started in the coal cellar. A "natural" fire can't start in a coal cellar, especially, as in this case in winter.

For another thing, these methods are very tedious. A proper evocation of a spirit to visible appearance means weeks of preparatory work. Again, they do not always succeed as fully as one would like. In short, I felt the need of further initiation,

and the communication of a method as safe and sane and easy as railway traveling.

I will not here detail the steps by which this came to me; enough to say that the A.:A.:,<sup>1</sup> the mightiest organization on the planet, chose me eleven years ago to do a certain work, and rewarded me in no niggard spirit. Then, nearly six years ago, the Frater Superior of the O.T.O. came to me, and appointed me Grand Master of the Order in all English-speaking countries of the Earth, and Special Delegate to America.<sup>2</sup> With this he conferred the secret of high Magick which I wanted. Easy to operate as a bicycle, and sure of results as a bottle of brandy, it only needed a little intelligent study and practice to supplant all the old methods, which became, as it were, adjutants of the real thing.

It is upon this that I am still at work, for I have not yet completely mastered it. There are two parts to every magical operation. The ancient Alchemists expressed this in their formula "Solve et Coagula." First, one must subtilize matter so as to be able to mould it, and then fix it again in gross matter so as to retain the desired form.

The first part of this is swiftly and surely accomplished by the method of which I write; the second part is not equally easy. The result is that one obtains always an earnest of the desired goal, a shadow of the reward, so to speak. But this

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<sup>1</sup> [The A.:A.: was established by Crowley and Jones ca. 1907 as a reformation of the Golden Dawn system, but with a much greater emphasis on individual practical work and—probably with the intention of avoiding the personality conflicts which broke up the G.D.—no Temple-based group work.]

<sup>2</sup> [Theodor Reuss (1858-1923), founded the Ordo Templi Orientis in 1906 as an amalgamation of various fringe and "high grade" Masonic systems with the Illuminati and Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, and the remains of Carl Kellner's Yoga circle. In April 1912 he chartered Crowley as head of a British section, and shortly afterwards issued a further authorisation to A.C. to establish the Order in other English-speaking countries.]

does not always materialize. For example, one performs an operation “to have \$20,000.” A few days later a prospect of obtaining that exact sum suddenly arises, then fades slowly away. Exactly what to do in such a case is a problem of which I have not yet found the perfect answer. Fortunately, it rarely happens that this trouble supervenes. In five out of six times the desired event comes naturally to pass without further disturbance. But I confess that I should like to make that sixth time safe, and I believe that in another few months I shall have done so. Already matters have improved seventy per cent. since I first was initiated in the Great Secret.<sup>1</sup>

It is no great wonder, then, that Magick has revived. When I began the work of the A.:A.: I had over a hundred pupils in less than six months.<sup>2</sup> The system of the A.:A.: is singular in many respects; in none more than in this, that it is really secret. No man except the Head and His Chancellor, and His Præmonstrator, knows more than two members; that one who initiated him, and the one that comes to him for initiation. In this way the work has spread through the world with no fuss or trouble. Only now and again is any open work visible—when Isis lifts her skirt enough to show her stocking!

For instance, one hears of public ceremonies on A.:A.: lines<sup>3</sup> in South Africa, in West Africa, in Vancouver, in Sydney, in Paris and London and (maybe) New York. These appear sporadic; their simultaneity is really the mark of what is passing in the mind of the Masters of the A.:A.:.

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<sup>1</sup> [See Crowley’s diary “Rex de arte regia” in *The Magical Record of the Beast* 666.]

<sup>2</sup> [It is not clear that more than a handful of these even got past Probationer.]

<sup>3</sup> [Given what was said in the previous paragraph this phrase seems almost a contradiction in terms. But then it was never made clear how the requirement for A.:A.: members not to know each other as such with the stated exceptions was to be reconciled with the clause in the Task of every grade from Probationer to Dominus Liminis (Liber 185) to everywhere openly proclaim one’s connection with the A.:A.: *etc.*]

The success of the O.T.O. is even more striking to the uninitiate, because its results are more apparent.

Part of the policy of this order is to buy real estate everywhere, to build and furnish temples, lodges, and retreats. Hardly a month passes but I hear of some new branch already financially sound, with its own headquarters, some beautiful property in the country, a fine house, large grounds, all that is needed both for initiations, and for the practice of that life, and of those works, which bring forth fruit from the seed of those initiations.<sup>1</sup> And every week brings me news manifold of what is being done. There is hardly a country in the world which has not dozens of members hard at work at magick, and for the most part making progress at a rate which almost makes me jealous, although for my generation I made advance which was a miracle of rapidity and excited the envy of all the duffers. But the work done by my Masters and (I think I may truly say) by myself also has simplified the work incredibly for all. In the *Equinox*, 777, *Konx Om Pax* and a few secret documents, the whole mystery has been explained; and, for the first time in the history of Magick, a standard Encyclopedia has been published. It is no longer necessary to study fifty strange tongues and wade through ten thousand obscure and ambiguous volumes. With three months' study and a year's practice any man of moderate intelligence and sufficient will-power is armed, once and for all, for the battle. Only in the O.T.O. is some knowledge kept back, and that because the great secret is so easy to learn and so simple to operate that it would be madness to entrust it to any person untested by years of fidelity.

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<sup>1</sup> [This, like many of Crowley's public statements concerning O.T.O., was a piece of exaggerated hyperbole, or just flat-out untrue as regards the actual extent to which the order was established at the time he was writing.]

These, then, are the principal causes of the Revival of Magick. It is not possible to publish the figures, nor would it be desirable. But I can assure the public that one has only to enter the magick path to find on all sides and in the most unexpected quarters, men and women whose whole life is secretly devoted to the attainment of the Royal and Sacerdotal Art.

Already Magick is once more a World-Power; the print of the Giant's Thumb is already the amazement of the incredulous; and within five years it will be clear enough to all men Who brought about the World war and why.

We shall see science triumphant, philosophy revolutionized, art renewed, commercialism checkmated; and astride of the horse of the Sun we shall see the Lord come as a conqueror into His Kingdom.

The Revival of Magick is the Mother of the New Æon.  
And who is the Father?

"Ho! for his chariot wheels that flame afar,  
His hawk's eye flashing through the Silver Star!  
Upon the heights his standard shall plant,  
Free, equal, passionate, pagan, dominant,  
Mystic, indomitable, self-controlled,  
The red Rose glowing on the Cross of Gold!"<sup>1</sup>

Do you wish to find Him?

Herein is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of The Beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and three score and six.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Crowley, *Aha!* See *Equinox* I (3).]

<sup>2</sup> [Revelation, XIII. 18. See *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Appendix III, for an account of a curious episode occasioned by this final remark.]